

Robert C. Tapella

**Prepared Statement Before the
Committee on Rules and Administration
U.S. Senate**

On

The Nomination to Serve As Public Printer

301 Russell Senate Office Building

Madam Chairman and Members of the Committee on Rules and Administration, it is both an honor and a pleasure to appear before you today to assist in your consideration of my nomination by the President to serve as the 25th Public Printer.

I was born in San Diego, California, and raised in the heart of Silicon Valley. I graduated from the California Polytechnic State University – San Luis Obispo with a Bachelor of Science degree in Printing Management and I have consumed a life-long diet of information technology, beginning with the earliest Atari and steadily progressing to the Legislative Information Management System used by Congress. In short, I have been fortunate enough to live on both coasts, where publishing and government information systems have evolved, to where we all are today – a rapidly changing hybrid of ink, paper, bits, bytes, digital imaging, and Internet-based distribution, search, and access.

As you know, the Public Printer essentially serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the Government Printing Office (GPO) with the responsibility to keep the American people informed about the work of their government. GPO is unique as both a government agency and the quasi-business role it holds as one of the largest print buyers in the United States.

By law and tradition, GPO has three essential missions: to provide expert publishing and printing services to all three branches of government; to provide, in partnership with Federal depository libraries, permanent public access to the printed and electronic information products of the Federal government; and to sell copies of authentic printed and electronic documents and other government information products to the general public. GPO currently employs 2,266 employees. More than 75% of GPO's employees are represented by 10 unions with 15 bargaining units. For FY 2007 GPO has a total budget of \$888 million, of which \$120 million comes from direct appropriations for Congressional Printing and Binding and for the Superintendent of Documents. The remainder of the budget comes from selling products and services to the Federal government and the general public.

By far, the most important role for the Public Printer and the entire GPO is to support the U.S. Congress. When GPO was established in 1861, printers set type by hand under candlelight, printing presses were driven by steam, and deliveries each morning to the Capitol were by horse-drawn cart. Throughout the last 146 years each Public Printer has adapted the agency to new technologies and new ways of meeting the needs of Congress. Today, GPO delivers the *Congressional Record* and countless other products and services each day, both digitally and in printed form, as we develop the digital tools of the future, which will help every Member of Congress and their staff work more efficiently and effectively.

As you know, I currently serve as GPO's Chief of Staff. I assumed this position in 2004 following my appointment by the Public Printer and have had the pleasure to continue to serve in that capacity under Acting Public Printer William H. Turri. I have spent my entire professional career in printing, communications, and service to Congress, including working for individual Members of Congress, a Committee, and the Clerk of the House.

I arrived at GPO five years ago as Deputy Chief of Staff with primary responsibility for the development of a strategic plan that would move GPO into the mainstream of technology and do it in a financially prudent manner. At that time, GPO had experienced five years of operating losses. I managed the fact-finding stage of developing GPO's *Strategic Vision for the 21st Century* (December 2004) which set out a plan to transform the agency into a digital platform for the production and dissemination of government information. During the process, I coordinated a total reorganization of the GPO management structure involving the 40 most senior managers; led staff level negotiations resulting in the June 2003 OMB-GPO compact which allowed greater flexibility in printing procurement for executive branch agencies while maximizing public access to Federal information; identified talent within the ranks of GPO employees and managers and creating opportunities for growth; and led the search for senior executive positions from the private sector and other government agencies.

The record shows that with the plan we developed, and with the hard work and support of GPO's talented employees, GPO generated net income in 2004, an accomplishment that has been sustained through our 2007 budget year. But just as significant, GPO was put on a path to increase access by the American people to digital and other information products of the Federal government, and to unlock this venerable agency's potential for the future.

As one of the largest players in the competitive marketplace of printing, GPO's mission has traditionally been accomplished through the production of conventional ink-on-paper printing followed by distribution of publications to Federal depository libraries and sales to individuals and dealers. However, with the advent of the Internet and other advanced digital technologies, the demand for printed products has declined. With the print marketplace shifting from analog to digital technologies, it requires dynamic and creative solutions to meet customer needs. In the past year alone we have achieved major milestones in customer service and product development for the Federal marketplace in printing and information management. Some examples of the tools we have created for our customers are:

- the e-passport, which we produce for the U.S. State Department. Following their schedule, we ramped up production to meet the demands of travelers nationwide, now producing more than two million passports per month. With key support from the Joint Committee on Printing (JCP) we have undertaken the development of a secure production facility located outside the metropolitan Washington, D.C., area that will allow us to continue to meet the ever increasing demands by the American public.
- a convenience printing program called *GPOExpressSM*, developed in partnership with one of the largest printers in America, which allows government agencies nationwide to take their immediate printing needs directly to over 1,300 print shops, in person or electronically, with assurance that the publication produced will be made available for public access through the Federal Depository Library Program.

While GPO has made major progress over the past five years, I believe there are four key elements of our strategic vision which still need to be addressed:

First – GPO needs to further develop and fully implement plans to train GPO employees, many of whom have served Congress and their country for more than 30 years, for the new and rapidly changing world of Internet-based publishing. I believe GPO's craftspeople understand the importance of moving to the next level of technology because throughout history, the men and women of the GPO have embraced technological advancement.

Second – GPO needs to secure and fortify its established content distribution system to ensure that the documents of our democracy get to the American people. As early as 1813, Congress and President James Madison signed into law a program to provide access to the information created by the government to the public. The Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) was born out of this program, and for nearly 100 years, GPO has managed it in partnership with the American library community. As the Federal government continues to move from paper documents to electronic information, GPO must maintain the original principles of the Federal Depository Library Program while embracing new technology. As the Federal government continues to move from paper documents to electronic information, there is much collaborative work to do.

Third – GPO must ensure that its publication and distribution systems will not only keep pace with trends in information technology, but also show leadership and innovation, and restore GPO's position as the source for authentic government information in every form. To that end and paramount to GPO's future success is our future digital system called FDsys, which will be a digital repository for all published Federal documents – past, present and future – that are within scope of the Federal Depository Library Program. This system will allow Federal content creators to easily submit content to GPO that can then be authenticated, managed, and delivered upon request and preserved for future generations. FDsys will form the core of GPO's operations and will forever change how we maintain and manage government information. The superbly talented technical leaders at GPO are working closely with the professional staff of Congress as well as the Executive agencies and Federal courts in determining how to make certain that we continue to meet the demands of the Federal government today while moving ahead into the future. FDsys is scheduled to debut in early 2008.

Fourth – While we are addressing the technology and education needs of our employees, we have not yet fully addressed the burden our antiquated facilities are placing on them. One of my most important undertakings as Public Printer will be to work with the JCP to determine how we will best provide proper facilities for our employees. We have creative ideas on how this might be done without burdening the taxpayers and look forward to working with the Committee on how we might accomplish this priority.

Madam Chairman, if confirmed as Public Printer and as a member of the Legislative branch, an on-going challenge we face is working together with the Executive branch and Federal courts to ensure that decisions we make today support the people's need for access to government information into the future. When printing presses controlled authentic government information, it was easy for the Public Printer to be the leader in Federal information policy. Today, when more than fifty percent of all U.S. government documents are born digitally, published directly to the web by Federal agencies, and never become ink-on-paper, the task is much more difficult.

Madam Chairman and Members of the Committee, GPO management and skilled employees along with the JCP face different challenges and many exciting opportunities to keep GPO moving forward. I hope you and your colleagues on the Committee take note of my combination of printing and congressional experience, along with my five years of executive management at GPO, and support my nomination to lead the men and women of the GPO as we continue to fulfill our mission to keep America informed.

This concludes my prepared statement, and I would be happy to respond to any questions you may have. Thank you.